

The Millennial Reign, A Study on Revelation 20 & 21

Introduction:

Is the structure of Revelation 20, chronological or cyclical? Does it make a difference in being able to rightly interpret it? We'll discover the only way to correctly interpret the 1000 years is to understand that it cannot be taken chronologically.

The key to understanding Revelation 20 is to understand the structure in which it was written. The 1000 year millennium commences in Revelation 20:1 and continues through Revelation 21:8 where it ends. This passage addresses four different entities and their condition at three different time frames. Those time frames are:

1. At the beginning of the 1000 years
2. During the 1000 years
3. At the end of the 1000 years

Only by cycling through each of these three time frames for each of the four entities can we rightly interpret events. As each of those four entities cycles through those time frames we track the progression of the condition of each entity.

1. The condition of the earth, Revelation 20:1; 21:1, 2
2. The condition of Satan and his angels, Revelation 20:1-3
3. The condition of the righteous saints, Revelation 20:4, 6, 12, 21:3-7
4. The condition, judgment and destiny of the wicked, Revelation 20:5, 8, 9, 12- 15, 21:8

For each entity we will detail its condition at the beginning, during, and at the end of the 1000 years.

Were Revelation 20 chronological, a problem crops up when we find the wicked compassing the city at the end of the 1000 years (Revelation 20:9). The city is already on earth at this time, yet Revelation 21:2, a later verse, records the descent of the city from Heaven after describing the new creation. Does the city descend to the earth before the end of the millennium or after, that is, before the new heavens and the new earth are created or after? It has to descend before the destruction of the wicked when they "compass the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them."

Sequence of Events Leading up to The Beginning of the 1000 Years:

Revelation is structured in cycles and flashbacks, often taking us to a victory scene when we are in Heaven praising God, and then flashing back to record how we got there. Therefore it is critical to understand the structure in which the book of Revelation is written if we are to rightly interpret the scenes and events.

Let's look at the chapters preceding Revelation 20 and 21 to see what happens before the millennium begins.

Revelation 14:6-12 records the final message of the gospel and the warning to all not to receive the mark of the beast and partake of her plagues. This message will result in everyone alive determining whether they will be sealed with the seal of God or be sealed or marked with the mark of the beast. (Revelation 13).

Revelation 14:14-20 describes the coming of Christ

Revelation 15:5-8 reveals probation has closed when all have been sealed, having chosen forever whom they will serve, God or man.

Revelation chapters 16-18 describes the plagues that fall on those who are sealed with the mark of the beast.

Revelation 19:11-21 describes the coming of Christ and the destruction of the wicked.

Revelation 20, 21:1-8 describes the events during the 1000 year millennium.

1) The Condition of the Earth at the Beginning, During & End of the 1000 Years:

We will discover that the earth shall be in such a state that it will not sustain the life of any earthly creature.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit...

Let's look at the Greek word for pit.

Pit: Strong's Greek #12 abussos, ab'-us-sos; from 1 (as a negative particle) and a variation of 1037; depthless, i.e. (specially) (infernally) "abyss": — deep, (bottomless) pit.

In the old Septuagint translation of Genesis 1:2, abussos is the greek word underlying the English word deep (Genesis 1:2). It describes the surface of our planet before Creation week, when it was "without form and void," and covered with water.

The condition of the earth before creation week:

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2) And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep...

The condition of the earth at the beginning and during the 1000 years:

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Isaiah 24:19 The earth is utterly broken down, the earth is clean dissolved, the earth is moved exceedingly. 20) The earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard, and shall be removed like a cottage; and the transgression thereof shall be heavy upon it; and it shall fall, and not rise again.

Isaiah 24:1 Behold, the LORD maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste, and turneth it upside down, and scattereth abroad the inhabitants thereof.... 3) The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the LORD hath spoken this word. 4) The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of the earth do languish. 5) The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. 6) Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left.

Isaiah 14:7 The whole earth is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing.

Isaiah 14:16 They that see thee [Satan] shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; 17) That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?

The prophet Jeremiah while describing the coming of the Lord describes the earth in the same language as Genesis, Isaiah, and Revelation.

Jeremiah 4:23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. 24) I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. 25) I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. 26) I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were

broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by His fierce anger. 27) For thus hath the LORD said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. 28) For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black: because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it.

Isaiah 13:10 For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine.

11) And I will punish the world for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; and I will cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible.... 13) Therefore I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the LORD of hosts, and in the day of His fierce anger.

Isaiah 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously.

Isaiah 34:4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.

Matthew 24:29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: 30) And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. 31) And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Revelation 6:12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; 13) And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. 14) And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. 15) And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16) And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17) For the great day of His wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

Without the sun, how will vegetation survive?

Joel 1:10 The field is wasted, the land mourneth; for the corn is wasted: the new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth. 11) Be ye ashamed, O ye husbandmen; howl, O ye vinedressers, for the wheat and for the barley; because the harvest of the field is perished. 12) The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: because joy is withered away from

the sons of men.... 15) Alas for the day! for the day of the LORD is at hand, and as a destruction from the Almighty shall it come.

Therefore we must conclude that the earth begins the 1000 years in a destroyed state where there is no light of the sun and therefore cannot sustain life. It remains in this state through the 1000 years until the new heaven and earth are created at the end of the millennium.

The condition of the earth after the 1000 years:

It is at the end of the 1000 years that the holy city comes down from Heaven.

Revelation 21:2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

Zechariah 14:4 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south.

The earth will not be totally destroyed or reach the "full end" until after the 1000 years have ended when the very elements will be destroyed before the heavens and earth are re-created.

2Peter 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2) Satan at the Beginning During, and End of the 1000 Years:

Satan at the beginning and during the 1000 years:

Satan is bound in the bottomless pit at the beginning of the 1000 years and remains bound throughout the 1000 years. At the end of the 1000 years he shall be loosed for a little season.

How is Satan bound? Are we to understand this in a literal sense, or is he bound in that he cannot deceive the nations during this time until at the end of the 1000 years? We find in verse 7 and 8 that when he is loosed he will again be able to deceive the nations. Why will he not be able to deceive during the 1000 years?

Jeremiah 4:25 I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled.

We will discover that the wicked are dead during this period and will not be resurrected until after the 1000 years.

Revelation 20:1 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. 2) And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, 3) And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Isaiah 14:20 Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed thy land, and slain thy people: the seed of evildoers shall never be renowned.

It makes sense that Satan is not physically bound but circumstantially bound in that he has no servants and no one to tempt. Peter describes how the angels ever since their fall have been bound in “chains of darkness,” meaning, not that they are restrained physically, but circumstantially.

2 Peter 2:4 For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

The demons cried out to Jesus when they were cast out of the demon possessed men and allowed to inhabit the swine. They are free to afflict the children of men until the time when there is no one to afflict as we shall see.

Matthew 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Satan at the end of the 1000 years:

Satan is now “*loosed out of his prison*” when he again is able to deceive the nations. He is able to deceive the wicked again because they have been resurrected in the second resurrection as we shall see.

Revelation 20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8) And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

After the attempt to attack the saints and the city, Satan is then cast into the lake of fire and brimstone and will finally be destroyed forever.

Revelation 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. 10) And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

In the Hebrew Sanctuary service as well as the feast days, Satan’s being bound in the bottomless pit is symbolized or represented by the scapegoat ceremony on the day of atonement when it is led out into the wilderness.

Leviticus 16:20 And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: 21) And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: 22) And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness.

Notice that the scapegoat is not sacrificed, therefore he cannot be an atonement for sin. The Scripture states,

Hebrews 9:22 And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

3) The Saints at the Beginning, During and End of the 1000 Years:

The saints at the beginning of the 1000 years:

We will now examine what happens with the saints at the beginning and during the 1000 years. Christ had promised His disciples that He would return for them and take them to His Father's house.

John 14:1 Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. 2) In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. 3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

The whole book of Revelation reveals events that happen between Christ's ascension and His return.

Revelation describes the saints as those that were beheaded for not receiving the mark of the beast and that they lived and reigned with Christ during the 1000 years. This is the millennial reign, when the saints dwell in Heaven with Christ for 1000 years.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

If the saints were beheaded for their faith and are described as living and reigning with Christ during the 1000 years, they must have been resurrected at the beginning of the millennium. Revelation 20 goes on to describe this resurrection as the "first" resurrection implying that there must be more than one.

The punctuation and verses were added by translators to facilitate clarity but sometimes mislead in the interpretations. Below is how it should have been separated.

Revelation 20:5b) This is the first resurrection. 6) Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

What can we conclude when we read of a "first resurrection?" There must be a second. Before we deal with the second, let us first look elsewhere where these two resurrections are mentioned. The Scriptures are clear that all shall be resurrected. Again we find that the saints shall be resurrected at Christ's coming.

Acts 24:15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

1Corinthians 15:20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. 21) For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. 22) For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. 23) But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming.

John 5:25, 28, 29 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . 28) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, 29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

The resurrection of the just takes place at the last day, when the angels are sent to gather the elect at the voice of the Archangel and when the trump sounds.

John 6:39, 40, 44, 54 And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which He hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. 40) And this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day. . . 44) No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Matthew 24:30, 31 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

1Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, 52) In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

The saints during the 1000 years:

Not only do the saints live and reign with Christ but they sit in judgment of the wicked dead, not that they decide the destiny of the wicked, but they are given the opportunity to judge whether Christ's judgment was just. When Revelation states, "and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works," it is to be understood that the records of their works stand in judgment and not that they literally stand before God while still dead.

Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them:... and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

Revelation 20:12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

Daniel 7:22 Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.

1Corinthians 6:2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3) Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?

Matthew 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Psalms 149:5 Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. 6) Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand; 7) To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments upon the people; 8) To bind their kings with

chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; 9) To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all His saints. Praise ye the LORD.

One might ask the question, if the saints judge the wicked during the millennium, then how was there a determination between the righteous and the wicked at the beginning of the 1000 years? In answer to that question, we might ask a couple more questions.

How fair would it be to have an execution of the judgment without an investigation first?

Does God need to investigate and record the works of man for His benefit?

This subject demands more time than this study will allow. In short, God is fair and His judgments are not arbitrary, but the decisions for life or death of every individual are based on an investigation of their works, not just the works, but the motives and desires which produce the works. God desires that all His creatures understand His justice in the final destination of every person. Therefore the record books are kept and will be confirmed by the whole universe when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Romans 14:11) the goodness and mercy of God.

Here are a few verses reflecting on the revelation of His righteous judgments.

Romans 2:1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2) But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. 3) And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? 4) Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? 5) But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; 6) Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

Revelation 15:3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. 4) Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

Psalms 51:1 Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. 2) Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. 3) For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. 4) Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Romans 3:4 God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, 15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

The saints at the end of the 1000 years:

Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.... 3) And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. 4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Revelation 21:6 And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. 7) He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

4) The Wicked at the Beginning, During & End of the 1000 Years

The wicked at the beginning of the 1000 years:

The wicked are slain at Christ's coming when Christ returns for His church at the beginning of the 1000 years.

Matthew 13:37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; 38) The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41) The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43) Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Revelation 14:14 And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. 15) And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. 16) And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped. 17) And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle. 18) And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe. 19) And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God. 20) And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.

Revelation 16:17 And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of Heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done. 18) And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was

not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake, and so great. 19) And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of His wrath. 20) And every island fled away, and the mountains were not found. 21) And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent: and men blasphemed God because of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

Matthew 24:27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. 28) For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

Revelation 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. 12) His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns; and He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself. 13) And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God. . . 16) And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS. 17) And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; 18) That ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men, both free and bond, both small and great. . . 21) And the remnant were slain with the sword of Him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of His mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

1Thessalonians 5:1 But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. 2) For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. 3) For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.

2Thessalonians 5:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, 8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

Isaiah 11:4 But with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked.

Isaiah 26:21 For, behold, the LORD cometh out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.

Jeremiah 25:33 And the slain of the LORD shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground.

If the waters turn to blood and the blackened sun ceases to give its light, who but Satan and his angels could survive? It makes sense that there is no one alive to bury the slain.

Isaiah 34:1 Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it. 2) For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and His fury upon all their armies: He hath utterly destroyed them, He hath delivered them to the slaughter. 3) Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.

Zechariah 14:12 And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Isaiah 13:9 Behold, the day of the LORD cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it.

Isaiah 66:16 For by fire and by His sword will the LORD plead with all flesh: and the slain of the LORD shall be many.

Isaiah 24:6 Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. [left alive]

Let's look at a few Scriptures that help us understand what Isaiah meant by "left."

Genesis 32:8 And said, If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape.

Leviticus 10:16 And Moses diligently sought the goat of the sin offering, and, behold, it was burnt: and he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, the sons of Aaron which were left alive, saying,

Leviticus 26:36 And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; ...

Numbers 26:65 For the LORD had said of them, They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.

Joshua 11:14 And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves; but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe.

Christ also used this same term to reveal who would be left alive.

Matthew 24:40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 41) Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Luke 17:35 Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 36) Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. 37) And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

The following verses help to clarify who would be "left."

Genesis 7:21 And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: 22) All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. 23) And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained [left] alive, and they that were with him in the ark.

Matthew 24:37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. 38) For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, 39) And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

Luke 17:26 And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. 27) They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

Matthew tells us when the flood came, it "took them all away." Luke reveals what "took them all away" meant, the flood came and "destroyed them all." This interpretation is consistent with Luke's account of "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together" (Luke 17:35). It is also consistent with what Matthew records, "For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together" (Matthew 24:28).

In our common usage of the words, "taken" and "left," we often misinterpret the passages to mean, "some are taken up" and others are "left behind." The above Bible passages confirm just the opposite is meant by "left."

The second resurrection:

As we have already found, the righteous will be resurrected in the first resurrection, will receive their reward and will be blessed and holy. We also discovered that they will judge God's judgment of the wicked. Now let's turn our attention to the "second death." If there is a second death, there must have been a first death. Who will suffer two deaths? It must be the wicked for the righteous only suffer one death and are resurrected in the first resurrection never to die again as do the resurrected wicked.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

Revelation 20:6 tells us that the saints are resurrected in the "first resurrection," implying that there must at least be a second. And there is. It is the resurrection of the wicked at the end of the 1000 years. It is not that they are resurrected twice, but that they come up in the second resurrection at the end of the 1000 years. They resurrect once, but die twice, and the second death is the final death with no resurrection. In the following verse it states that the wicked would be visited "after many days." It appears Isaiah is referring to the 1000 years.

Isaiah 24:21 And it shall come to pass in that day, that the LORD shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. 22) And they shall be gathered together, as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in the prison, and after many days shall they be visited.

Revelation 20:5a But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished.

Revelation 20:13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:...

The same author, John, wrote in his gospel regarding the two resurrections, the "resurrection of life" and the "resurrection of damnation." He does not specify that there is 1000 years between them, but only that there is one resurrection for the righteous and one resurrection for the wicked. John is consistent in his understanding of the wicked dying once to be resurrected once and die again.

John 5:25, 28, 29 Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. . . 28) Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, 29) And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

It will be at this time that the wicked will receive the execution of the sentence determined by the saints during the 1000 years while the wicked were still dead and the record of their deeds were examined.

Revelation 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, 8) And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, [the resurrected wicked] to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. 9) And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

The wicked are made alive, having been resurrected when to receive their sentence and their final execution.

Revelation 20:13b And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

It is at this time that they too, will be convinced of the righteous judgment of God.

Jude 14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of His saints, 15) To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him.

At this point, all of God's creatures have been fully convinced of His righteous judgment, whether things in Heaven, things on earth, and things under the earth.

Philippians 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

The second death:

Below are the Scriptures that speak of the "second death." The righteous, who are overcomers, will not suffer the second death.

Revelation 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Revelation 20:6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.

It is the wicked who suffer the second death.

Revelation 20:14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.
15) And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

When the Scriptures speak of "for ever and ever," we must allow the Word of God to define its own terms if we are to rightly interpret.

Revelation 20:10 And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Deuteronomy 15:17 Then thou shalt take an aul, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, and he shall be thy servant for ever. And also unto thy maidservant thou shalt do likewise.

In the following passage, "for ever" means "as long as he liveth."

1 Samuel 1:22 But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned, and then I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever. ... 28) Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there.

The time is coming when the wicked will be no more. This is known as the second death, being eternal.

Ezekiel 18:4 Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.

Psalms 22:29 All they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship: all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him: and none can keep alive his own soul.

Psalms 92:7 When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever:

Psalms 37:10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Proverbs 10:25 As the whirlwind passeth, so is the wicked no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.

Malachi 4:1 For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. 2) But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. 3) And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they

shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the LORD of hosts.

What about the fate of Satan, surely if any of the wicked should be tormented for ever, it would be Satan.

Ezekiel 28:18 Thou hast defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities, by the iniquity of thy traffick; therefore will I bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee.

19) All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shalt thou be any more.

The last enemy to be destroyed is death:

“Death and hell” are thrown into the lake of fire. But isn’t hell the lake of fire? Can hell be thrown into itself? Most of the time that hell is used in the Bible it refers to the grave. Death and the grave will be thrown into the lake of fire, and there shall be no more death or suffering. Paul speaks of this concept in Corinthians.

1Corinthians 15:26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

1Corinthians 15:54b Death is swallowed up in victory. 55) O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it.

If the wicked are suffering in eternal fire, how can it be said that there will be no more sorrow or pain or crying?

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Is it the punishing that is eternal, or the punishment that is eternal? In the following verse, it states that it is the destruction that is everlasting, not the destroying. How can you have both? One is ongoing while the other is final.

2Thessalonians 1:7 And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels, 8) In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9) Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;

What about the passages that clearly suggest that the punishing is everlasting?

Revelation 14:10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: 11) And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

When we consider the following verse, we understand how Scripture interprets “for ever and ever.” The “smoke” will eventually “consume away.” When this is understood, it perfectly harmonizes with the rest of the Scriptures.

Psalm 37:20 But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away.

The same principle of interpretation can be applied to the following verses which speak of the “everlasting fire.” It simply means, until it burns out becoming ashes which cannot burn.

Matthew 25:41 Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

Matthew 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

The Bible says that Sodom and Gomorrha suffered the vengeance of “eternal fire.” Are they still burning?

Jude 7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

Peter interprets Jude's “eternal fire” of Sodom and Gomorrah as being brought to ashes.

2 Peter 2:6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.

What about “unquenchable fire?” Does “unquenchable” mean perpetual burning, or that it can't be quenched until it burns out?

Luke 3:17 Whose fan is in His hand, and He will throughly purge His floor, and will gather the wheat into His garner; but the chaff He will burn with fire unquenchable.

Mark 9:43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45) And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

The same unquenchable fire was predicted for Jerusalem by Jeremiah in the Babylonian siege, and it did happen.

Jeremiah 17:27 But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched.

Yet that fire is not burning today.

2Kings 25:8 And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of king Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, unto Jerusalem: 9) And he burnt the house of the LORD, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt he with fire.

If we allow Jeremiah to define, “it shall not be quenched,” we discover its meaning, “that none can quench it.”

Jeremiah 4:4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.

Let's take a closer look at the word, consume:

Strong's Hebrew 3615. *kaw-law'*; a primitive root; to end, whether intransitive (to cease, be finished, perish) or transitived (to complete, prepare, consume):—accomplish, cease, consume (away), determine, destroy (utterly), be (when ... were) done, (be an) end (of), expire, (cause to) fail, faint, finish, fulfil, x fully, x have, leave (off), long, bring to pass, wholly reap, make clean riddance, spend, quite take away, waste.

The following verses agree with the Strong's definition of "consume," to end, to cease, be finished, perish.

Psalms 59:13 Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah.

Psalms 104:35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

Job 7:9 As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more.

The Scriptures tell us that it is the righteous who will dwell in "everlasting burnings."

Isaiah 33:14 The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? 15) He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil;

What are those "everlasting burnings?"

Hebrews 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.

This fire is obviously not to be taken literally and this is why it is so important to allow the Bible to define its own terms otherwise we are drawn away with every false doctrine.

The following verses verify the conclusion that we have reached in our study, namely, that all the wicked receive their reward of damnation at the end of the 1000 years and not individually at death. It speaks of the transgressors being "consumed," which agrees with Malachi and Ezekiel speaking of the wicked, including Satan, being brought to "ashes."

Isaiah 1:28 And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the LORD shall be consumed.

Psalms 104:35 Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the LORD, O my soul. Praise ye the LORD.

Zephaniah 1:2 I will utterly consume all things from off the land, saith the LORD. 3) I will consume man and beast; I will consume the fowls of the heaven, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumblingblocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the land, saith the LORD.

This will be the final destiny of the wicked, they shall not be.

Psalms 52:5 God shall likewise destroy thee for ever, He shall take thee away, and pluck thee out of thy dwelling place, and root thee out of the land of the living. Selah

Obadiah 16 For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been.

Psalms 37:10 For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Another good question to ask ourselves is, "If the fire comes from heaven to earth to burn up the wicked, how can it still be burning when all is burned up, even the very elements according to Peter?" And yet we are promised that after the earth is burned up, God will re-create a new heaven and a new earth.

Revelation 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea....

Matthew 13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; 39) The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40) As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41) The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42) And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Consider the following verses as examples of how effectively Satan's first deception, "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4), has been accepted by the majority. May God set us free from deception by the truth.

Truth:

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him **should not perish**, but have everlasting life.

Misunderstood to say,

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should **have everlasting life in torment**, but have everlasting life.

Truth:

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is **death**; but the gift of God is **eternal life** through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Misunderstood to say,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is **eternal life in hell**; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Truth:

James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and **sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.**

Misunderstood to say,

James 1:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15) Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and **sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth eternal life in hell.**

Truth:

1John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath **life**; and he that hath not the Son of God **hath not life.**

Misunderstood to say,

1John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath **life**; and he that hath not the Son of God **still hath life, only in hell.**